

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ICAE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
FDRE-00 HEW-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 HA-05 CA-01
SCS-06 EB-08 IO-13 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 AGRE-00
DOE-15 SOE-02 COME-00 EUR-12 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6529

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E.O. 11652: N/

TAGS: SOCI, ENRG, ABUD, SWEL, GY, AFSP, ABLD, ASUP, ASEC, APER
SUBJECT: GOG REQUEST FOR DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) GEORGETOWN 1065, (B) STATE 90805

1. SEPTTEL (GEORGETOWN 1078) REPORTS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGETOWN'S ELECTRIC POWER GENERATING CAPACITY AND THE PROSPECTS FOR SHORT-TERM, MID-TERM AND LONG-TERM RELIEF. THE INFORMATION ON WHICH THAT CABLE IS BASED WAS DEVELOPED DURING MEETINGS WITH THE GUYANESE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH THE CRISIS AND MY BRITISH AND CANADIAN COLLEAGUES. IT REPRESENTS, I BELIEVE, THE BEST PICTURE OF THE SITUATION NOW AVAILABLE.

2. DESPITE MINISTER KING'S STATEMENT TO ME REPORTED IN PARA 3 OF REFERENCE A, WE DO NOT HAVE A DISASTER HERE IN THE STRICT DEFINITION OF THAT WORD. NEITHER WE NOR THE GOVERNMENT ARE ABLE TO RELATE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF DEATHS OR INJURIES DIRECTLY TO THE POWER FAILURE OR THE RELATED NON-AVAILABILITY OF WATER. BUT WHAT WE VERY
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LIKELY DO HAVE IS A DISASTER ABOUT TO HAPPEN. FOR WANT OF POWER AND WATER, THE FEW HOSPITALS THAT OPERATE IN GEORGETOWN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CUT BACK THEIR OPERATION SCHEDULES AND HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO DEGRADE THEIR SANITATION STANDARDS. THE FLOUR MILL, THE ONLY ONE IN GUYANA, IS SUSPENDING OPERATIONS AS OF APRIL 9 BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ASSURE POWER DELIVERY

THROUGHOUT THE GRINDING PERIOD. TWO OF THE THREE BOTTLING PLANTS HAVE CLOSED DOWN BECAUSE THEY ARE UNABLE TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS OF SANITATION. THE OXYGEN PLANT, THE MAJOR SUPPLIER OF OXYGEN, ACETYLENE AND COOKING GAS FOR THE COUNTRY, IS ALSO SUSPENDING OPERATIONS. THE ONLY WAY TO GET THESE FACILITIES BACK INTO FULL OPERATION OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS IS, IN THE VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S TASK FORCE AND MY OWN, TO FURNISH THEM WITH SOME SORT OF EMERGENCY GENERATING EQUIPMENT TO COVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND THE MOMENT WHEN THE GOVERNMENT HOPES TO HAVE NEW GENERATORS IN COUNTRY CAPABLE OF HANDLING THE BASIC POWER NEEDS OF GEORGETOWN.

3. IF THE EXISTING SITUATION DOES NOT PRECISELY MEET THE DEFINITION OF A DISASTER, IT HAS ITS POTENTIAL ELEMENTS. IF FOR WANT OF A PRECISE DEFINITION DISASTER RELIEF IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR APPLICATION TO THIS PROBLEM, I WOULD HOPE THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO WORK IMAGINATIVELY WITHIN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF OUR EXISTING AID PROGRAM HERE TO ENABLE US TO MAKE AVAILABLE SOME OF THE EMERGENCY GENERATING UNITS THE GOG IS CONVINCED IT NEEDS, PARTICULARLY FOR THE HOSPITALS, THE WATER WORKS, THE HATCHERY, THE MAJOR FOOD RETAILERS (MOSTLY GOG-OWNED) WHICH MUST RUN FREEZERS AND REFRIGERATORS, THE PRISONS (ONE OF WHICH IS THE BREADBAKER FOR THE HOSPITALS), AND THE OTHER BAKERIES. THE BRITISH AND CANADIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENTS HAVE RESPONDED PROMPTLY AND WELL TO THE REQUEST MADE OF THEM. (IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THEY HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN THEIR EARLIER ROLES AS ADVISORS IN THE GENERATING AREA, BUT NO ONE IN FULL POSSESSION OF THE FACTS CAN LAY THE BLAME FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION ON THEIR RESPECTIVE DOORSTEPS.) THERE IS A HUMANITARIAN NEED HERE AND I WOULD HOPE THAT WE CAN RESPOND TO IT REGARDLESS OF HOW THE CRISIS DEVELOPED AND WHO EXACTLY IS TO BLAME.

4. AID DIRECTOR BOORADY WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON MONDAY, APRIL 10, AND WILL BE CONTACTING THE CONCERNED OFFICES. SHE AND I HAVE BEEN OVER THE GROUND AND SHE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO FURNISH ADDITIONAL DATA AND DETAIL TO SUPPORT THIS REQUEST.
BURKE

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